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HORSE-MOUNTED TROOPS IN LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

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The operational concept calls for "Horse Qualified" teams within the special forces structure capable of providing advice and assistance to host government forces. The horses utilized would be locally obtained in the area involved. Other than for training and proficiency maintenance, no horse-mounted establishment in CONUS is envisioned.

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THE UNITED STATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE
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HORSE-MOUNTED TROOPS IN LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT
AN ARGUMENT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HORSE-MOUNTED
CAPABILITY WITHIN UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

BY

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A Research Paper Submitted to the Faculty of the United
States Army War College in Partial Fulfillment of the
Senior Service College Fellowship Program

June 1991

ABSTRACT

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I - THE SCOPE OF THE PAPER

This paper presents an argument for the development of a horse-mounted operational capability within US special operations forces and will address five specific areas:

- The rationale for the concept
- The intended use of horse-mounted troops
- Advantages of horse-mounted troop employment
- An historical background
- The recommended operational concept

It is important to note that what is being presented is conceptual or strategic in nature. Specific details of tactical doctrine development, training, and force structure will not be addressed.

The key aspect is the development of a horse-mounted capability. The argument is not to create combat units mounted on horses. The argument is to develop and maintain a capability to conduct combat operations on horse-back in appropriate situations. The need for such a capability is presented in the rationale. The use of horses in armed combat in an insurgency/counter-insurgency setting is the primary emphasis. Thus, the operational utilization of horses and mules as pack animals is not discussed. The role of the horse in combat is the primary focus.

There are several modern examples of horses being effectively used in combat during the conduct of counter-insurgency operations. Six historical examples will be presented.

Lastly, the operational concept as it applies to US special operations forces is presented and concludes with five specific recommendations.

II - THE RATIONALE FOR THE CONCEPT

The point has been made by numerous writers that the US will be faced with the possibility of involvement in low intensity conflict for the foreseeable future (20:17)(17:1). This situation will continue in spite of the collapse of world Communism and the conclusion of The Cold War. This is particularly true where a perceived threat to vital United States interests is concerned.

As an example, the amassed political and economic power of the cocaine cartels in the Andean countries is astounding. Cocaine has

become a "cash and carry" crop which has supplanted a large part of the local traditional economy. Not only does this produce revenue for the cartels, but it provides lucrative employment for a portion of the population involved in growing, refining and exporting cocaine.

In countries such as Peru, where the economy is staggering under tremendous inflation, the problem of eradicating the cocaine trade becomes more complex than simply "arresting the traffickers." As cartels have grown in power, they have become capable of raising essentially private armies. In some cases, they have contracted for military training from several international "security specialists."

To date, the Andean countries have been able to cope with their own internal security but the possibility exists that a legitimate government may request assistance from the US in suppressing an insurgency fomented by cocaine producing interests. Given that the suppression of drug traffic into the US remains a vital interest, the US might be called upon to aid an anti-drug government wage low intensity conflict. This is an obvious example. A more intriguing example would be the fomenting of an insurgency by the US as part of an economy of force measure while conventional warfare is conducted in another area of the theater. Taking the recent Gulf War as a case in point, the idea occurs of inciting and supporting an insurgency on the part of the disaffected Kurdish population in northern Iraq with the avowed intention of tying down Iraqi forces while the "main event" is conducted elsewhere. These examples demonstrate that the US must continue to develop and maintain a capability to conduct counter-insurgency and insurgency assistance and operations extrinsic to the old paradigm of The Cold War.

One of the criticisms levelled against the US approach to counter-insurgency operations has been the preoccupation with high technology and the idea that if the US can fight a general war utilizing high technology, the same technology can be successfully employed in any conflict along the spectrum (17:1). The problem with this approach is one of appropriateness. The ideal is to match the amount and level of high technology to the situation. The tendency has been to err on the side of massive amounts of high level technology.

The use of horses in combat can provide an element of the appropriate mix of amounts and levels of high-low technology in any counter-insurgency and other special operations that the US can expect to be involved in for the foreseeable future. Further, it

*Information in these paragraphs was supplied during discussions between the author and officers on the staff of USCINCLANT & USCINCSOUTH in March 1991.

is in the interest of the US to develop a horse-mounted capability within special operations forces (20:21).

III - THE INTENDED USE OF HORSE-MOUNTED TROOPS

This section outlines the intended use of horse-mounted troops in the conduct of counter-insurgency and other special operations emphasizing the military and tactical advantages provided by their use. The discussion is conceptual in nature. It is assumed that if the concept were to be adopted, further development of a detailed tactical doctrine would be accomplished concomitant with the concept adoption.

Strategically, the concept calls for the use of horse-mounted troops raised from the local population of a country involved in counter-insurgency operations or a population acting as a host for insurgency or other special operations. Regardless, the US would find itself in a supporting role advising, training and, possibly, participating in the operations.

The operations envisioned all fall in the low-intensity end of the spectrum of conflict. By definition, armed combat at this end involves small units. No attempt is made to assign applicability to the sort of combat conducted by major combat units engaged in mid- to high-intensity warfare.

Combat at the low-end of the spectrum is characterized by extreme fluidity, surprise, the avoidance of decisive engagements, raids, ambushes and the general harassment of fixed installations and facilities such as bases and roads. Psychologically, intimidation on the part of both sides is a key factor.

Generally, the envisioned role of horse-mounted troops in combat is as mounted infantry using the horse to enhance mobility in order to close with the enemy.

IV. ADVANTAGES OF HORSE-MOUNTED TROOP EMPLOYMENT

Horse-mounted troops provide or enhance:

- Mobility
- Surprise
- Security
- Intimidation

A. **MOBILITY:** General Nathan Bedford Forrest once said that the key to his success was "to git thar fustest with the mostest" (14:587). Horse-mounted troops provide a capability to do just

that. Horses possess several obvious advantages over foot mobile troops. They can cover distances quicker than troops on foot and well-cared for horses can last longer than troops on foot. Horses are not limited to roads and trails thus providing a degree of mobility not realized by wheeled or tracked vehicles. Horses are not dependant on the availability of suitable landing zones and thus provide an advantage over helicopter borne troops. Horses can be used to track bands of insurgents for long range patrolling and as an immediate reaction force to encircle and trap insurgents involved in ambushing conventionally mobile (foot or vehicle) convoys and troop movements. Tracking operations utilizing horse-mounted troops, tracking dogs, and scout helicopters were successfully carried out by both the Rhodesians and South Africans. As described in the next section, there are several situations where the horse/scout helicopter have provided the appropriate mix of high/low technology.

Regarding long range patrolling, the experience of the Portuguese in Angola, the Rhodesians and the South Africans in South-West Africa (now Namibia) indicates that healthy horses in good condition can sustain distances of 45-50 kilometers per day for extended periods of time (i.e., weeks). The US Marine experience in Nicaragua in the 1930s validates this observation and is further validated by current aerial re-supply capability.

The Portuguese effectively used horse-mounted troops in Angola as an immediate reaction force to encircle and trap insurgents seeking to disengage after springing an ambush on a convoy. Classic guerilla tactics call for the ambushing force to disengage and "melt into the country side" upon springing the ambush. Since people do not "melt", horse-mounted troops provide an ideal capability to encircle, trap and round-up the fleeing insurgents.

B. SURPRISE: The horse's ability to provide surprise is a function of mobility and diminished sound. Mobility has already been discussed. Suffice it to say that there are places where horse-mounted troops can get to quicker.

Diminished sound should speak for itself. The movement of horses is quieter than the movement of vehicles or aircraft.

C. SECURITY: Horses, like most animals, have much greater developed senses than man. Generally, horses have sensed the presence of hostile forces before the rider and have been able to alert the rider to that presence as indicated in the historical examples.

Another aspect of security is the observation afforded to the rider by being mounted. Firstly, the perspective of the rider is enhanced by the height gained by being mounted, enabling the rider to see further. Also, since the perspective is changed, subtle variations of cover, camouflage and concealment are easier to

detect. Secondly, a rider can devote more attention toward observing his surroundings if he is not concerned, regardless how subliminally it may be, with where he is placing his feet. Thus, the horse increases security in a tracking/patrolling mode.

Other somewhat sanguine aspects of being mounted are the recorded instances of horse-mounted troops who have detonated mines and booby traps where the horse absorbed the impact of the explosion leaving the rider uninjured or less injured than had he been on foot.

D. **INTIMIDATION:** There are two aspects to intimidation: terror and invincibility. The most obvious is the terror induced in disorganized, fleeing troops being pursued by horse-mounted troops. A man on a horse is an extremely intimidating phenomenon. Horses fair poorly against well-entrenched or highly-disciplined troops prepared to receive a charge; however, the horse is in his most favorable element when pursuing fleeing troops (19:154-155). The other aspect of intimidation is the cumulative result of mobility, surprise and security as it creates in the mind of the insurgent an impression of his adversary's invincibility.

V. FEASIBILITY OF HORSE-MOUNTED OPERATIONS

The six aspects of feasibility are:

- Wide geographic applicability
- Availability of horses
- Low visibility
- Cost
- Logistical supportability
- Training suitability

A. **WIDE GEOGRAPHIC APPLICABILITY:** There are few places in the world where horses cannot operate. Generally, horses cannot operate in swamp lands, extremely dense jungle, extreme altitudes and sub-arctic tundra because the terrain would limit horses to established trails and negate the mobility advantage. Extreme altitudes refers to oxygen deficiency and does not exclude mountainous terrain. In fact, breeds such as the Haflinger and Peruvian Paso do very well in mountainous terrain. Sub-arctic tundra is not ideal because there is no foraging capability in winter and summer warmth turns the surface into a spongy muskeg that would limit horses to established trails. Extreme cold is not a limiting factor and breeds such as the Icelandic Pony, the Mongolian Pony and Cossack cross-breeds fare very well in extreme temperatures. Through inoculations, modern veterinary medicine has made available for the horse the band encompassed by the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. This area was previously not suitable because of the prevalence of vector borne sleeping sickness

(4:212). In the historical background section, examples of the effective modern use of horses in a counter-insurgency role will be presented for mountainous terrain in Yugoslavia and Italy, terrain in Nicaragua, and Bush-Veld/Savannah terrain in Southern Africa.

B. AVAILABILITY OF HORSES: This factor is closely related to wide geographic applicability. Simply put, where there are people, there are horses. This is important because the operational concept envisions the use of local horses rather than the deployment of horses from the continental US.

C. LOW VISIBILITY: Low visibility implies the visibility of a US support effort in a particular region. Generally speaking, the US policy regarding assisting friendly governments in the conduct of counter-insurgency operations has been to provide advice and assistance in such a way that the counter-insurgency remains proprietorial to the host government (20:19). A counter-insurgency effort properly prosecuted remains "their effort and their war." The US generally has sought to remain in the assistance role rather than taking over the direction of the effort. The course of the Vietnam War was obviously a major exception.

The use of horses supports this low visibility thrust in several ways. The logistical support required to maintain and sustain horses is considerably less than that of any modern fighting or mobility equipment. Including all categories of aviation assets as well as fighting vehicles (tanks and armored personnel carriers) along with trucks and cars. Not only is the need for a complex logistic infrastructure in support of a counter-insurgency effort reduced, but so is the need for spare provision. Additionally, the requirement for technical personnel to provide advice and assistance in supply and maintenance (and, in some cases, to actually perform maintenance) on highly complex equipment is reduced. This is ultimately realized in terms of lowered cost. In summary, horse-mounted operations lessen US presence in counter-insurgency efforts while enhancing the ability of a host nation to prosecute its own operations.

D. COST: Horses can conduct operations at the lower-end of the spectrum of conflict effectively and economically. In terms of end item costs alone, it is possible, purchasing local horses in most countries, to mount a platoon for the cost of a 2 1/2 ton truck (1:24). The savings in comparison to other mobility equipment (armored personnel carriers and utility helicopters) increases in geometric proportions. The savings extend further to accessory and spare parts as well as fuel (food and forage). The Portuguese and Rhodesian experience from 1961 - 1980 clearly demonstrated that all horse furniture (saddlery, bridling, etc.) could be fabricated locally (2:20). Regarding food, even if provender had to be imported, it remains cheaper in bulk quantities than the petroleum,

oil and lubricants that would be required for transportation equipment.

E. **LOGISTICAL SUPPORTABILITY:** In comparison to mechanical equipment, the logistical requirements to operate, maintain and sustain horses are insignificant. Essentially horses require saddlery, bridling and, in some cases, horse shoes. The Portuguese in Angola and the Rhodesians were able to fabricate these items locally (2:20). Wherever there is an indigenous horse population, food and forage is also available locally. There are some operational areas where food and forage would have to be supplied externally. Generally, the only items that would have to be provided to a host country would be medicine and equipment required to conduct veterinary support.

F. **TRAINING SUITABILITY:** Generally, the US has been interested in supporting counter-insurgency efforts in the Third World. It is incomparably easier to teach an agrarian peasantry how to pick a horse's hoofs than to maintain the avionics deck of a UH-60 helicopter.

Obviously there is a need for specialized technical expertise such as veterinarians, farriers and saddlers. However, with the exception of veterinarians, the art of the farrier and saddler are within the cultural grasp of Third World populations.

VI - HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE USE OF HORSE-MOUNTED TROOPS IN COUNTER-INSURGENCIES

A. BACKGROUND

Six modern examples of the effective use of horse-mounted troops in the counter-insurgency role are discussed in this section. When viewed in toto, it can be seen that the use of horse-mounted troops to provide or enhance the four capabilities (mobility, surprise, security, intimidation) are not only theoretical concepts but have been proven on the counter-insurgency battlefield. One obvious conclusion that can be drawn from these examples is that horse-mounted troops are an effective force in the conduct of counter-insurgency operations.

B. NICARAGUA, 1927 - 1933

From January 1927 to January 1933, the US Marine Corps was engaged in the suppression of an insurgency being conducted against the Nicaraguan Government by Augusto Cesar Sandino whose followers called themselves Sandanistas. At the height of the US involvement, the Marine expeditionary force consisted of two Marine regiments (the 5th and the 11th) and a Marine aviation unit (VO -

Mounted.* Initially mounted on mules, the company switched to horses in 1929 and conducted numerous patrols and convoy escort operations in the rugged mountainous and jungle terrain in the region of Nueva Segovia. The Commander 52^d Company, Mounted in 1929 wrote an article about his experiences as summarized below.

The Marines purchased horses locally. They were really ponies weighing about 600 lbs. and standing an average of 13.1 hands. Operationally, the horses carried in excess of 225 lbs. (either cargo or rider and his weapon ammunition & equipment). Being local horses, they lived off the land and foraged as they went. Patrols lasted as long as 45 days. The preferred way of moving was to alternate walking with trotting although in some areas this was impossible because of the density of vegetation. Additionally, when operating along steep mountains, riders dismounted and led their horses. In some instances, troopers had to physically cut trails into the sides of mountains to allow passage of the horses. However, 52^d Company, Mounted never failed to complete a patrol regardless of the terrain encountered.

Generally speaking, operations were conducted in conjunction with dismounted rifle companies which established base camps from which mounted patrols were conducted in all directions to distances of ten to twenty miles. Aviation assets of the Marine Observer Squadron were integrated into operations by providing aerial reconnaissance and re-supply.

A theme which constantly recurs is the contact with the indigenous population. The Marines used native scouts who rode with the patrols and were helpful in three ways:

- They knew the terrain and could guide patrols.
- They knew the cultural nuances of the people and area and could glean information from a deserted village or abandoned camp site that a non-native would miss.
- They acted as interpreters in dealing with the local population.

This last point is extremely significant because dealing with the population meant not only the literal translation but observation of the customary form conversations followed. These conversations yielded information about Sandanista activities that could not be obtained through other means. An apt comparison can be made to the

*All of the details in this example are extracted from an article written by Capt. Maurice G. Holmes, USMC, Commander 52^d Company, Mounted at the time. The full citation appears as item #18 in the Bibliography.

policeman walking his beat and talking with the people of the community as opposed to the more distant and impersonal policeman driving through a neighborhood in his patrol car.

Several of the factors discussed previously, are described by Commander 52^d Company, Mounted. Generally, horses were under saddle from 0700 until 1600 hrs. Mounted Marines did not get as tired as dismounted Marines and retained their abilities to observe their surroundings for correspondingly longer periods. Also, since the horse performed the mechanical function of moving, the rider was able to devote more attention to the observation of his surroundings.

Finally, Commander, 52^d Company, Mounted noted that in ambush situations horses provided protection to men in several ways:

- The physical size of the animals naturally inhibited the "bunching-up" of the patrol in the kill zone.
- Sandanistas were trained to fire at men and the animals tended to be the targets rather than the riders.
- When the Marines fought dismounted, the horses provided cover against small arms.

In one ambush described by Commander, 52^d Company, Mounted, the Sandanistas sprang an ambush which caught a Marine column from its left flank. The kill zone was about 250 yards long and had a machine gun at each end with about 60 Sandanista riflemen in between. Six animals were killed or wounded out of 38 and no Marines were hit.

Commander, 52^d Company, Mounted noted that this was the only ambush in which his company was involved. Normally, his flank security (or point element) detected and chased-away ambushers prior to their contact with the main body.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this example:

- While not ideal terrain, horses can effectively operate in Nicaragua or mountainous, jungle terrain.
- Local horses can be successfully obtained and used.
- Horses can extend the range over which patrols can be conducted both.
- Horses can protect men in combat.

C. YUGOSLAVIA 1943 - 1945

While the Second World War cannot be considered a low-intensity conflict, there were several aspects that were conducted in a low-intensity mode and the Axis Powers had to conduct several counter-insurgency campaigns. The most notable with regard to the use of horses was the German counter-insurgency campaign in Yugoslavia from 1943 - 1945. A major element of the German forces involved in operations against Tito's Communist partisans was a Cossack division*. Recruited from Soviet Prisoners-of-War and Russian emigres living in Yugoslavia and Germany.

With the exception of one brigade, the Cossacks were commanded by German officers (23:293) and maneuver units were augmented with German combat/service support troops. The types of missions assigned were:

- security of lines of communication, specifically railways telephone and telegraph lines (25:230) (8:18).
- deep penetration raids into partisan strong-hold areas (8:18).

They were successful at both missions (8:19). In a raid on Tito's personal headquarters, they captured virtually all partisan documents, destroyed the headquarters and missed capturing him by a matter of minutes (23:266). After Soviet troops entered Yugoslavia, the XV Cossack Cavalry Corps covered the German withdrawal by fighting a series of delaying actions with the Soviet Army (25:230).

The Commander, 1st Cossack Brigade (A German Officer) provided a report to the Historical Branch, US European Command in 1950. In his comments, Commander, 1st Cossack Brigade pointed out several factors that are supportive of horse-mounted troops in counter-insurgency operations:

- Mounted troops were better able to observe mines and booby traps than dismounted troops (8:18).
- Horses sensed the presence of the enemy and provided warning prior to actual contact being made (8:18).

*In late 1944 this unit was expanded to consist of two mounted divisions and a dismounted division and was styled as the XV Cossack Cavalry Corps. (25:230)

- Insurgents avoided stubborn defensive tactics and preferred to fall back after a delaying action. Mounted troops were an ideal force to entrap withdrawing insurgents with an envelopment (8:19).

D. ITALIAN CAMPAIGN, 1943

In April 1945, the Army Ground Forces Board, Mediterranean Theater of Operations, US Army (AGF Board, MTOUSA) surveyed several US corps and division commanders about the suitability of horse cavalry employment in Italy*. All voiced their opinion that horse cavalry could have been well employed and with the exception of Commanding General, 34th Infantry Division, were enthusiastic. These were regular Army officers who had seen the battlefield evolve from Pershing's pursuit of Pancho Villa in 1916 through First World War France to the North African-Sicilian-Italian campaigns and therefore had an experiential basis for their professional opinions. The opinions of two officers are quoted below:

Major General Willis D. Crittenberger, Commanding General IV Corps. said:

Italy, as many other countries in the temperate zone, is well suited for the use of horse cavalry to exist on the country. In the rapid advance of the IV Corps from Rome to the Arno River, horse cavalry could have been used to great advantage. Three or four squadrons would have been very helpful in a pursuit role using secondary routes and trails to cut off elements of the withdrawing German Army. At the present time there is none available. In the ten months campaigning north of Rome, there had never been a time when I would not have welcomed some good horse cavalry (13:A-376).

Similarly, Major General Geoffrey Keyes, Commanding General, II Corps offered this opinion:

The terrain of Italy is much more suitable for the use of horse cavalry than for mechanized cavalry. It is rough and mountainous with limited plain or valley areas, and many sections are inaccessible to vehicular traffic, even the 1/4 ton truck. "Jeep trails" are constructed as far as possible into these areas and then the pack mules take over. In general, only the main and secondary highways are suitable for vehicular traffic; almost all the local roads and trails are built for animal traffic only.

*Commanding Generals II Corps, IV Corps, 10th Mountain Division, 34th Infantry Division, 85th Infantry Division.

It is believed that horse cavalry could operate advantageously in this theater under either of two conditions, both of which have been present from time to time throughout the Italian campaign. The first condition is that the enemy withdraw at a rate of two or more miles per day. The second condition is that the enemy lines be thinly manned.

Under the first condition, horse cavalry can be used:

To move across country to cut off delaying forces, and/or operate in rear of covering forces to harass enemy columns or raid newly set up positions; as covering forces for infantry elements moving on foot, to quickly outflank enemy delaying positions and/or develop new defensive positions; as flank guards to cover gaps in our lines and maintain contact with adjacent units.

Under the second condition, horse cavalry can be used as reconnaissances patrols, or with Partisan guides, as raiding parties in rear of enemy lines.

Finally, under any condition horse cavalry can operate as foot soldiers in the same manner as regular infantry. In this connection it may be pointed out that horse cavalry units have a larger proportion of fighting strength than have the mechanized cavalry units (13:A-383).

In fact, a provisional horse-mounted reconnaissances squadron was formed in the 3rd Infantry Division in Sicily in July 1943. The unit conducted combat reconnaissances operations for the Division in Italy and was very successful (5:30). Typical missions were:

- Reconnaissances to the flanks and to the rear of enemy positions (22:68).
- Reconnaissances and counter-reconnaissances screen (22:68).
- Flank contact with neighboring units in the mountains (22:69).

These operations were conducted in coordination with mechanized reconnaissances elements of the Division. The unit used captured German horses and equipment and ultimately had to be disbanded in December 1943 because the US Army could not provide replacement personnel, horses and equipment (10:37). This example demonstrates that horse-mounted troops could effectively operate in mountainous terrain while engaged on the "modern battlefield" of the Second World War.

The comments of Generals Crittenberger and Keyes are of interest because they can easily be transposed to the lower-end of the spectrum of conflict. In 1965, the Department of the Army contracted a study entitled "The Utility of Horse Cavalry and Pack Animals in Counterinsurgency Operations in the Latin American Environment" (10). In this study, senior officers from several Latin American countries and the Philippines were interviewed and all agreed that horse mounted troops can be significant in counterinsurgency operations and cross border smuggling prevention operations. This is particularly true of areas with poor surface road networks, either because of the state of development of the country or the restrictive nature of the terrain (10:3).

Unfortunately 1965 was the year that the US committed major ground combat forces to Viet-Nam. As that war moved into the higher realms of high technology conventional warfare, American attention to lower levels of warfare waned. However in Africa, during the 1960s - 1980s, the Portuguese, Rhodesians and South Africans used horse-mounted troops successfully in the prosecution of counterinsurgency operations.

E. ANGOLA 1968-1974

The Portuguese Empire in Africa dated from the 16th-17th centuries. In the 1960's the Portuguese colonies consisted of Guine in West Africa, Mozambique and Angola in Southern Africa. During 1961-1974, the Portuguese were actively prosecuting counter-insurgency operations in these colonies. By 1974, Portugal had committed over 196,200 troops to these counter-insurgency operations collectively known as the Portuguese African Wars. With the exception of Guine, the Portuguese were successful in holding the line against the various insurgent factions. By most accounts, the war in Angola had reached a state of stalemate in 1973 (9:17). The Portuguese African wars, among other domestic problems in Portugal, began to strain the fabric of it's conscript armed forces. In April 1974, a coup d'etat was staged in Portugal (1:35). A result of the coup d'etat was that the Portuguese simply packed up and went home. In 1975, the Portuguese formally granted independence to Mozambique and Angola (1:10-11).

The war in Angola began in 1961. There had been revolutionary activity prior to that and two insurgent groups had evolved: the Frente Nacional De Libertacao De Angola (FNLA) and the Movimento Popular De Libertacao De Angola (MPLA). In 1966, the MPLA splintered and a third group, Uniao Nacional Para a Independencia Total De Angola (UNITA) was formed. The FNLA, based in Zaire, and the MPLA, based in Zambia (1:8). After its formation, UNITA consisted mainly of Ovimbundu people and was based initially in Zambia until 1968. All of these groups were Communist-oriented and received support from either the Soviets or Chinese. The support varied in degree amongst the groups as they were all in competition against each other as well as against the Portuguese. In fact,

they spent more time fighting each other than fighting the Portuguese and this was taken maximum advantage of by the Portuguese (1:10).

By 1968, the FNLA was unable to conduct combat operations in Angola and had to be contented with the role of a force in exile in Zaire. UNITA was expelled from Zambia and led a tenuous existence as an underground force in Angola. This left the MPLA against which the Portuguese began offensive operations in 1968 (1:10). From 1968 - 1970 the MPLA accepted the Portuguese challenge (9:5). This in turn led to the Portuguese adoption of an active cross-border raiding and sweeping campaign during 1972-1973. The Portuguese destroyed 1 of 2 main MPLA base camps and staging areas in Zambia and in essence shut-down the MPLA capability to conduct offensive military operations in Angola (1:10). By 1974, the Portuguese could not destroy the movements based in Zaire or Zambia without significantly expanding the war beyond Angola and the insurgents could not challenge the Portuguese inside Angola (1:34).

Since the main threat to Portuguese interests came from the Zambian based MPLA and UNITA, most counter-insurgency operations were oriented in the Eastern and Central areas of Angola. The first horse-mounted platoon was organized at Silva Porta in 1966 and by 1968 had grown into the 1st Cavalry Group (Grupo De Cavalaria No. 1) consisting of three company-sized squadrons (1:18). Unofficially, the mounted troops were called dragoons (Dragoes) because they functioned as mounted infantry. The two missions assigned to the dragoons were long-range patrolling and providing flank security for the movement of conventional troops, particularly in-country where the nature of the terrain confined motorized movement to roads (9:6).

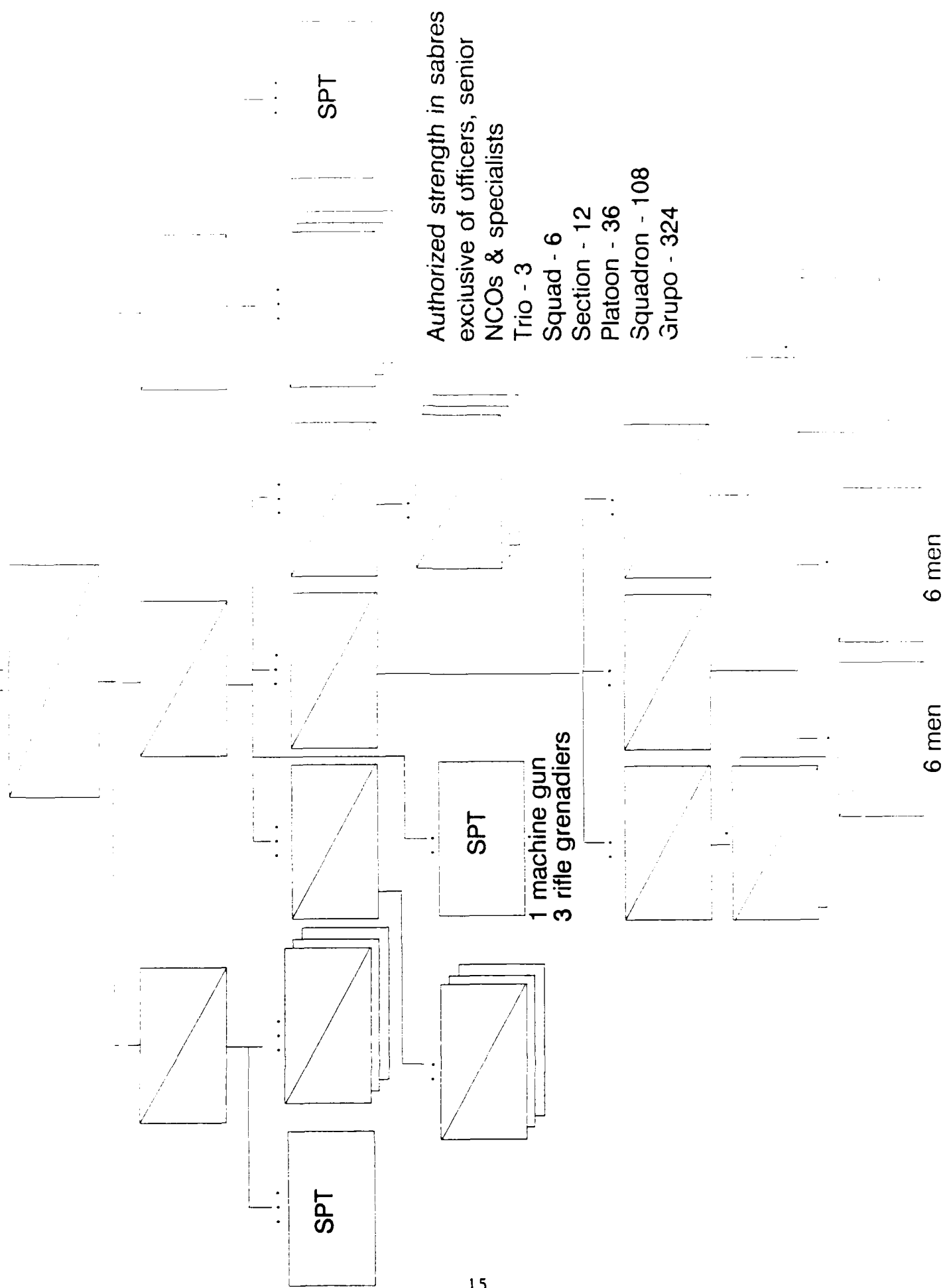
The organization of the 1st Cavalry Group is shown in Figure 1. In addition to the personnel shown on the chart, each squadron had a farrier assigned to squadron headquarters. The dragoons were recruited locally from amongst Portuguese colonists in Angola (1:24).

The use of horse-mounted troops gave the Portuguese the following capabilities and advantages over the insurgent forces:

- Psychological Effect: Horse-mounted troops generated genuine terror in insurgents particularly when they were being pursued.

*The information in this paragraph is extracted from an article written by Lieutenant Colonel Antonio Ferrand D'Almeida who commanded the 1st Cavalry Group in Angola. The full citation is item #3 in the Bibliography.

Figure 1. GRUPO DE CAVALARIA NO. 1 ANGOLA 1968 - 1974



- Surprise Effect: The relative silence of horses and the ability to suddenly "appear" on the battlefield made them superior to helicopter borne troops when conducting raids.
- Security: Horses were less vulnerable to mines and ambushes than vehicles. Additionally, horse-mounted troops were better able to detect insurgent groups in the bush than helicopter borne troops.
- Speed of Reaction: Horse-mounted troops were able to quickly change direction and react to enemy actions as well as re-directing pursuit of fleeing insurgent groups.
- Mobility and capacity to go over long distances: Horse-mounted troops patrolled up to 50 kilometers per day. One squadron conducted a patrol from 8 August to 1 September 1971 and covered 500 kilometers. The patrol carried about 1 week's rations for both horses and men, relying on periodic aerial resupply. The condition of the horses was generally good at the end of the patrol. Even though some horses lost as much as 50 kilograms body weight, their physical resilience was not reduced.

F. RHODESIA 1976-1980

Although the two main liberation movements in Rhodesia, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) were formed in the early 1960's, insurgency warfare did not begin until the Rhodesian Government declared unilateral independence from Great Britain in 1965 (2:6).

ZAPU was based mainly in Zambia and Botswana while ZANU was based in Zambia and in Mozambique (2:8-9). Throughout the war, the Rhodesian security forces exercised control over the interior of the country. Tactically, the Rhodesians held their own and there was never any doubt that Rhodesian security forces could prevail in any engagement against the insurgent forces (17:5). Strategically, however, Rhodesia was almost completely isolated, having become a "pariah" state on the world scene (17:5). Conversely, ZAPU and ZANU enjoyed wide-spread support from the Third World and the Communist world as well as tacit, although reluctant, support from Great Britain and the US. Neither side could militarily destroy the other. Certainly, the insurgents were no match for the Rhodesians (2:13). However, the Rhodesians could not destroy the insurgent infra-structure in Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia without risking total open warfare with those countries.

The result was a stalemate that held only the gloomy prospect of continued warfare. Unable to continue waging war indefinitely under conditions of virtual diplomatic and economic isolation, the Rhodesians "threw in the towel" in 1979 resulting in an internationally supervised election in 1980. ZANU became the government of Zimbabwe and the war was over (17:15).

Rhodesian military operations consisted mainly of destroying insurgent bands operating within Rhodesia and cross-border raids into neighboring countries to capture prisoners and destroy insurgent logistical and staging bases (2:12). The cross-border operations had to be carefully executed to minimize the risks of open conflict with the countries themselves (17:5).

Grey's Scouts, organized in 1976, were assigned the following missions:

- Conduct patrols in order to make contact with insurgent bands (4:213).
- Provide a screen in conjunction with cross-border raids (4:213).
- Assist engineers in the construction of cross-border barriers in country inaccessible to vehicles (2:21).

Patrols would be dispatched from a centralized squadron base camp for periods of 6 to 7 days. Normally a patrol consisted of 8 soldiers in contact with other patrols and their next higher echelon of command. Tracker dogs organic to the unit were used in these patrols. When contact was made, a decision was made as to whether to insert an airmobile fire-force or whether to engage with the horse-mounted troops. If an airmobile fire-force was inserted, the horse-mounted troops took up blocking positions to intercept fleeing insurgents from the airmobile insertion. If only horse-mounted troops were used, the horse-mounted soldiers would dismount, fight as infantry while other horse-mounted sections operating in the area would provide support (4:213).

Frequently, the patrols were directed from helicopters. In one spectacular engagement, a squadron directed by helicopter, located a band of 75 insurgents and succeeded in eliminating 60 insurgents (4:213). Generally, a normal day's patrol would cover about 40 kilometers (2:20).

The purpose of the screen was as much to intercept fleeing insurgents as it was to provide security for the raid.

Grey's Scouts were largely self-sufficient. Organic to the unit were farriers, smiths, saddlers and veterinarians. The

organization of the unit less service support is shown in Figure 2 (2:20).

The following capabilities and advantages of Grey's Scouts have been cited:

- A horse could carry a quarter of its weight (approximately 330 lbs) and were used to carry mortars, mines and explosives (4:213).
- Horses offered speed of reaction (4:213).
- Horses were quiet (4:212).
- Horses could extend the range of a ground patrol (average 40 kilometers/day) (2:20).
- Horses increase the rider's field of visibility thus improving the rider's ability to track (4:212).

G. **NAMIBIA/SOUTH AFRICA 1977-PRESENT**

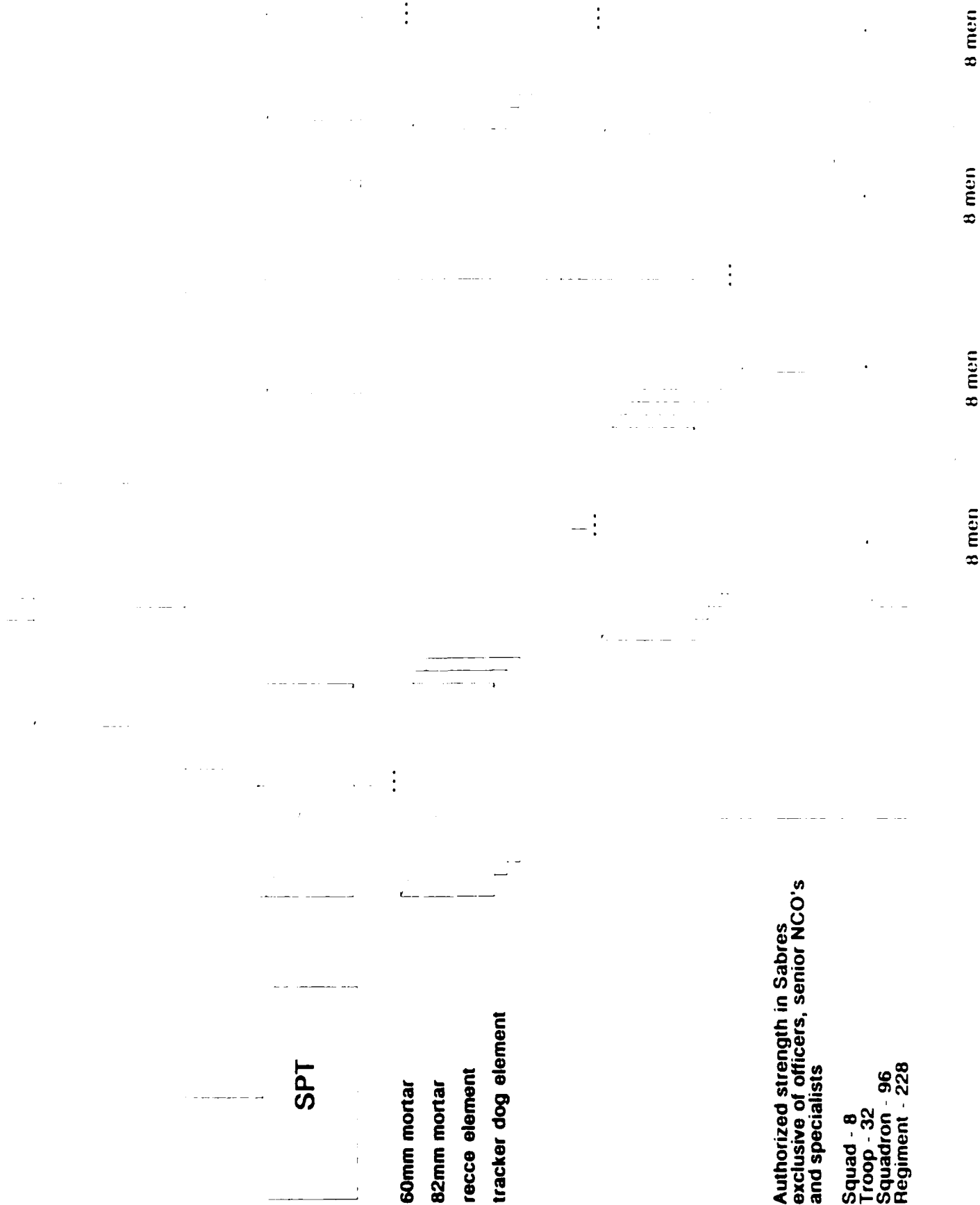
In 1962, The South West African Peoples' Organization (SWAPO) organized its military wing, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and commenced terrorist operations in South-West Africa (now Namibia) (24:59). Initially conducting sporadic operations on a low-level, the tempo accelerated after 1974 when the Portuguese withdrew from Angola and SWAPO was able to operate with greater impunity (24:71).

The South African Defense Force (SADF) bore the brunt of the counter-insurgency operations and organized a separate arm, the South West African Territory Force (SWATF), to handle the counter-insurgency. One unit of the SWATF was the South West African Specialist Unit (SWASpes) which consisted of three wings: horse-mounted troops; motor-cycle mounted troops; and tracker-dog handlers (16:108).

The concept of employment was to attach SWASpes units to conventional battalions in a mode tailored to the requirements of the mission and situation (24:119). The guidelines for horse vs. motor cycle employment were:

- For Horses: - Rougher terrain.
- Requirement for noise discipline (15:110).
- Requirement for observation (i.e., the height of the riders above the ground) (15:110).

FIGURE 2. GREY'S SCOUTS RHODESIA 1976 - 1980



- The more ambiguous the situation, the more it favored the horse (15:110).
- For Motorcycles:
 - Less rough terrain (15:110).
 - Requirement for speed out-weighed the requirement for noise discipline (15:110).
 - Requirement for observation was not a factor (15:110).
 - The less ambiguous the situation, the more it favored the motorcycle (15:110).

Generally, area sweeps were conducted in combination with conventional troops mounted on armored trucks (Buffels, Hippos or Casspirs) with the horse-mounted troops preceding the follow-on force by 500 to 1000 meters (24:119).

Advantages demonstrated by horse-mounted troops in Namibia are the same as those previously identified.

Today, the SADF maintains an equestrian unit and an equestrian center at Potchefstroom (12:40). The equestrian center is responsible for training both horse and rider as well as for breeding horses and purchasing horses (26). The equestrian unit is organized into platoons of 64 men and 42 horses and each platoon is commanded by a Major. Of the total number of assigned personnel, 34 are operational riders. The remainder are support personnel such as the stable master, farrier, medic, and veterinary assistant. As such, the platoon is a self-contained unit capable of being attached to conventional battalions as required (7:20-21). Counter-insurgency missions assigned to mounted platoons include (26):

- Combat Patrols
- Blocking Force Operations
- Sweeping and Flushing Operations
- Reconnaissance
- Contact Patrols (i.e., making and maintaining contact with the local population of a specific area)
- Mobile reserve
- Convoy escort

Since the US will be involved with counter-insurgency operations, the applicability of horse-mounted operations to counter-insurgency efforts must be recognized and a US capability to operate on horseback is required.

VII. THE OPERATIONAL CONCEPT AND CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Horse-mounted troops have clearly proven their effectiveness on the counter-insurgency battlefield. Since the US is likely to be involved with counter-insurgencies for the foreseeable future, the employment of horse-mounted troops cannot be overlooked. The US must be able to integrate the employment of horse-mounted troops into its overall approach to counter-insurgency operations.

Firstly, a tactical doctrine for horse-mounted troops must be developed. This doctrine should incorporate the lessons learned from historical examples. The doctrine should also incorporate such concepts as appropriate air/ground integration, communication, and battlefield surveillance.

Secondly, within the Special Forces structure, there must be "Horse Qualified" soldiers or teams. The exact number or composition would depend on the situation obtaining in each special forces group's geographical area of responsibility. In addition to the normal Special Forces skills, individuals or teams would be selected to receive riding instruction and would train to be proficient exponents of the doctrinal utilization of horse-mounted troops. While the tactical doctrine would be developed within the TRADOC/John F. Kennedy Center for Special Warfare system, the "Horse Qualified" teams would be deployed to provide advice, assistance and training to the host government directly involved with counter-insurgency operations.

Thirdly, proficiency/sustainment training for "Horse Qualified" soldiers and teams is required. Initial equitation training can be conducted on a civilian contract basis. As the tactical doctrine is developed, it can be integrated into the curriculum of the John F. Kennedy Center for Special Warfare. Finally, in the normal course of deployment for training in the theater, "Horse Qualified" teams would become familiar with local breeds of horses along with local styles of riding.

Finally, "Horse Qualified" teams or soldiers would be deployed as required.

The following recommendations are made:

- A. That the US Army develop a tactical doctrine for the use of horse-mounted troops in the counter-insurgency/special operations environment.
- B. That the structure and apportionment of horse qualified teams within special forces groups be identified.

- C. That a training establishment under the auspices of the John F. Kennedy Center for Special Warfare be organized to train required Special Forces soldiers in doctrine and horsemanship.
- D. That a stock of horses be obtained to support the training and to maintain proficiency of horse qualified soldiers assigned to the Special Forces groups.
- E. That deployment for training should be conducted for horse qualified teams to familiarize them with the local conditions and the specific types of horses available in their areas of geographic responsibility.

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